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*Ministry of the*  
**MENNONITE**  
**CHURCHES**  
*to the victims*  
*of leprosy*



## *"The Key to Leprosy is the Child"*

states Dr. Robert G. Cochrane, world renowned leprologist and medical advisor to American Leprosy Missions, Inc. Most cases of leprosy are contracted in childhood, though the disease may not become apparent till later.

"If all little *children* could be separated from their infected parents, the disease could be brought under control by that means alone in due time," adds Doctor Cochrane. The separation of babies at birth from the source of contagion is an almost 100% guarantee against contagion.

*Children* are not only more susceptible than are adults but also are more responsive to treatment. If treated early, they may be saved entirely from the terrible deformities that plague leprosy sufferers.

These facts have brought about a change of emphasis in leprosy work. American Leprosy Missions, Inc. is helping with the care of some 6,000 uninfected *children*. Also great stress is given to early detection of the disease.

"Suffer the little *children* to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19:14.



## *Mennonites...*

... like other American Protestants reach out hands of compassion to such of the ten million Hansen's disease (leprosy) patients as they *can* reach in the countries where they have missions. The four groups whose work is described here — THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, THE BOARD OF MISSIONS & CHARITIES, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, and THE CONGO INLAND MISSION — do so through an agency now fifty years old, *AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS, INC.*, and its parent body in London, *THE MISSION TO LEPERS*, now eighty-two years old. These two bodies exist to support with special funds this special, and nowadays increasingly expert, branch of medical missions. *American Leprosy Missions* aims *within its means* to supply *all* the working funds required above government aid and the patients' own productivity, while the Boards of Missions provide the personnel. It falls at present much below its aim and asks help from all who read these words.

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### *India*

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Leprosy Colonies .....	85
Population .....	361,900,000
Leprosy Cases (estimated) .....	1,700,000

**Champa** One of India's largest hospitals for Hansen's disease was founded just after the turn of the century when two starving beggars implored Dr. P. A. Penner of the Mennonite mission in Champa for a few crumbs from his table.

He gave them more than crumbs. The compassionate missionary doctor built for them two huts near the mission station, fed and clothed them, and gave them the best treatment known at that time for Hansen's disease. But most of all he gave them the knowledge that they were no longer outcasts, but part of a Christian brotherhood of man.

Since that day more than half a century ago, some 5,000 other victims of one of India's most devastating afflictions have found a refuge of love and healing at Bethesda, as the hospital community was named by its patients. More than 400 have been discharged as arrested cases and almost 2,000 have found a new life in the Christian gospel.

Among these was Bir Singh, who came to Bethesda as a young boy several years after his mother and sister had been admitted for treatment. Bir Singh had been initiated into the ritual of the Kabir Panthi religion at twelve, but soon came under the influence of Bethesda's Christian atmosphere which was so peaceful and comforting. He soon joined his

mother and sister in accepting Christ and became one of the most enthusiastic members of the church. Now happily married to a girl who was also brought up in Bethesda, Bir Singh has left the colony as an arrested case and has been accepted as an evangelist in a village outpost, where there is a fertile field for missionary endeavor.

Located near the banks of a river, Bethesda cares for 400 adults and 100 children in a modern, beautifully kept community with clean white cottages surrounded by flower gardens and neatly trimmed shrubbery, wide streets and brick buildings — the whole plant owned by the Mission to Lepers (London).

The able-bodied do all the work of the community — farming, harvesting the rice, tending the vegetable gardens and the livestock, digging wells, and some learn special skills. Many of the boys have become adept at weaving and turn out material for table cloths, curtains, shirts, dresses and trousers.

*Staff members:* Dr. Arthur D. Thiessen, medical director; Rev. Aron E. Jantzen, superintendent; Miss Augusta Schmidt, nurse.

**Dhamtari** Patients at the isolated hospital settlement of Shantipur (City of Peace) have always had a hard time getting supplies. They had to depend on local bazaars in nearby Dhamtari for the things they could not grow themselves, such as oil, spices, salt, pulse, etc. But the local people were so hostile to them that marketing became almost impossible. With the cooperation of the mission officials a supply store was opened on the grounds. Operated by two of the patients, items are sold at cost price and patients are allowed to trade their rice rations for such substitutes as dahl and wheat.

This local enterprise is just one of the many examples of community initiative displayed by Shantipur patients over the years.

Commenting on this trait, the Rev. S. Paul Miller described his patient's attitude toward the recent building and remodeling program, which included a new dormitory for women and extensive repairs of the caretaker's house.

"The patients seemed to see the end from the beginning — the value of these improvements to their Home. They worked hard and faithfully. For all this improvement we needed about one hundred thousand bricks. To buy them means a big expense. Since we had no one with experience in making bricks, we hired a man to do the moulding and the patients did all the rest of the work even to the laying up of the kiln."

This settlement also is owned by The Mission to Lepers (London).

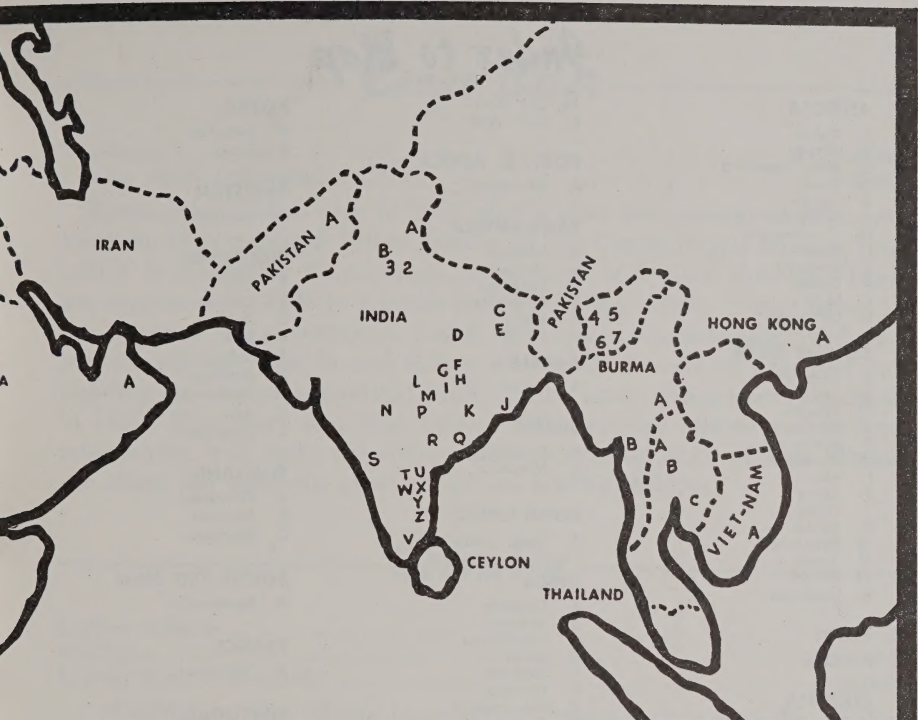
*Staff members:* Rev. S. Paul Miller, superintendent; Rev. John Friesen, acting supt.; Mr. Joshua Pilloo, Mrs. Nellie Dasru, nurses.



# *Little Known Facts About Leprosy*

- There are an estimated ten million people throughout the world who are suffering from leprosy, a small percent of whom are receiving any kind of treatment or care.
- Leprosy is not as contagious as most people believe. It is much less contagious than T. B. or many other diseases, the presence of which people accept so very calmly.
- Leprosy can be cured. There are different kinds of cures. (1) In some cases there is sufficient resistance in the patient to stop the progress of the disease. Such cases may break out again. (2) There are many cases that in time seem to burn themselves out, usually leaving the patient terribly deformed but symptom-free. (3) Now great hope has arisen because of the splendid results secured through the use of the sulphone drugs. Early cases are cured. More advanced cases are rendered symptom-free.
- Children are more susceptible to leprosy than are adults. It is thought that in most cases infection comes in childhood even though the disease does not manifest itself till later.
- Leprosy is being combatted by scientific research and by practical treatment. In the U. S. A. the Leonard Wood Memorial (American Leprosy Foundation) is an example of an institution devoted to research in the field of leprosy. American Leprosy Missions, Inc. is devoted primarily to the care of leprosy victims, although the Technical Medical Advisor and a few missionary doctors associated with ALM have made and are making contributions in the field of research of outstanding significance.
- Leprosy victims find the social stigma more excruciating than the physical pain which the disease may produce. Until the social stigma of leprosy has been eradicated, science will never be able to control or cure the disease of leprosy.
- American Leprosy Missions has expunged the word "leper" from its vocabulary because of its offensive social implications. Some agencies have gone even farther and dropped the word "leprosy" in favor of "Hansen's Disease" (H. D.) in an effort to undercut this social stigma.
- H. D. patients who are cured and who return to community life again must have social acceptance and a normal opportunity for re-employment.
- Surgery is restoring use of hands and removing other deformities which hinder successful rehabilitation.
- Faith in God through Jesus Christ is restoring hope and self-respect in people who were utterly lost in hopelessness and degradation.





# **MENNONITE STATIONS**

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- F Champa
- P Dhantari

## **CONGO BELGE**

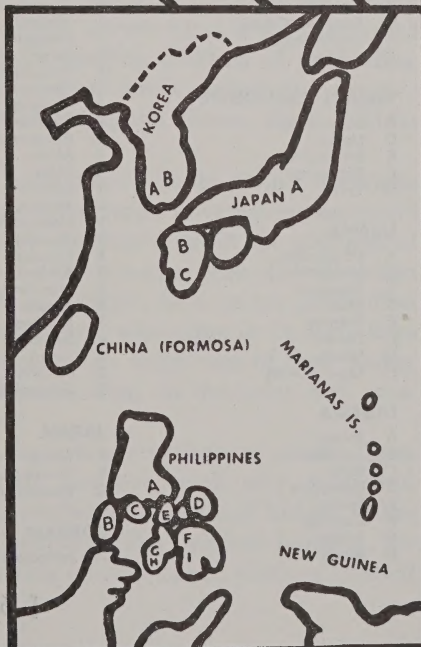
- R Kamayala

## **COLOMBIA**

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- A Barrio Grande





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## *Congo Belge*

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Population .....	112,250,000
Leprosy Cases (estimated) .....	200,000

**Kamayala** Taken over in 1953 after a slow development of 20 years, from the Unevangelized Tribes Mission by the Congo Inland Mission, this colony is continuing its emphasis on the care of healthy children. They are supported by ALM in a house built by ALM in 1948. A new factor is the approval of government, which provides a considerable fund for patients officially sent in and shares with ALM the cost of gradually rebuilding the colony in sundried brick. Thirty such houses were completed in 1955. Miss Mary and Miss Bertha Miller are the veteran and tireless missionaries who make the colony their consuming labor of love. There are about 400 residents, of whom 34 are healthy children.

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## *Colombia*

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Leprosy Colonies .....	3
Population .....	11,295,000
Leprosy Cases (estimated) .....	30,000

**Cachipay** One of the tragedies of Hansen's disease is the cruelty inflicted upon innocent children. In many communities the unwarranted stigma of the disease extends even to the healthy children of its victims. Unwanted by fearful relatives, shunned by friends, denied the security of a home and in constant danger of contracting the disease, these children face a bleak future.

About a decade ago Mennonite missionaries in the South American country of Colombia, where there are three large government sanatoria for Hansen's disease, became very much concerned about the problem of these unwanted children. And out of this concern grew the Christian center of Cachipay for homeless boys and girls. At a recent graduation ceremony in the Home, some of the youngsters who came in its early days were among those who received diplomas. The brightness of their young faces was exceeded only by the glow to be seen on the older and occasionally marred ones of their parents.

Forty-three boys and girls whose parents are patients at nearby Agua de Dios, one of the government hospitals, now live, work, play, study and worship in the cluster of stone and tile-roofed buildings half hidden in the tropical foliage near the village of Cachipay. The original building, an old hacienda, houses the staff and contains offices, chapel, clinic, a manual

arts department. Other buildings include a boys' dormitory, a girls' dormitory, a dining hall, the school, and a laundry and machine shop.

Cachipay is more than a pleasant Christian refuge for unwanted children. It is a preparation for the future. Basic qualities of good citizenship are learned in the everyday routine of the Home. Each boy and girl shares cooperatively in all the work. Healthy bodies are maintained not only by periodic examinations by qualified doctors and nurses, but also by well balanced meals and by a recreational program of healthful outdoor sports. Hobbies and crafts are encouraged and natural talents in music and drawing and the like are nurtured by sympathetic teachers.

The secret of this happy home is to be found in the deeply religious atmosphere.

*Staff members:* Rev. and Mrs. Gerald Stucky, directors; Miss Jane Soldner, assistant.

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## Paraguay

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Leprosy Colonies .....	2
Population .....	1,405,627
Leprosy Cases (estimated) .....	10,000

**Barrio Grande** The long projected leprosy work in Barrio Grande in Paraguay, conceived as a token of gratitude to the Paraguayan Republic for opening its doors to Mennonite immigrants, has now taken the form of an ambulatory service to some 100 victims of Hansen's disease in the immediate area.

Though original plans called for the establishment of a large colony and American Leprosy Missions contributed \$16,000 toward basic buildings, needs of the community now favor the more modern plan of visiting patients in their own homes. This type of care provides a more effective check in the spread of H.D. because

- 1) the contacts of each case are examined regularly;
- 2) more patients ask for treatment if there is no fear of being uprooted from their homes;
- 3) more cases in early stages are detected and treated;
- 4) a general medical influence is felt in communities formerly ignorant of basic hygiene principles.

Buildings built and to be built serve for housing of staff and of Mennonite settlers who give voluntary services and for cases which need hospitalization, but ambulatory service will be stressed and extended.

*Staff members:* Dr. John R. Schmidt, superintendent; Dr. J. Walters, village work.



## *Thus With Financial Aid and Technical Counseling*

AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS, INC. helps the missionaries of the American Churches to care for the victims of leprosy. In this way American Leprosy Missions, Inc. operates as an **AUXILIARY OF ALL BOARDS** enabling medical missionaries and others the world over to care for and often cure people with leprosy.

The hope of *healing* is now greater than ever before. With healing comes the necessity of rehabilitation, (1) physically, through orthopedic surgery and physiotherapy, (2) vocationally, through training to become self supporting, and (3) spiritually, through faith in Jesus Christ and through fellowship with Christians.

From where will AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS get the money which has been promised to the missionaries for their leprosy work?

***Only from the voluntary contributions of people who want to help with this work.***

Does AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS receive bequests and annuities?

***Yes, write for our leaflets on this subject.***

Where may gifts for leprosy work be sent?

***To any accredited volunteer representative or to any address on the next page.***

***"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And He put forth his hand and touched him saying, I will: be thou clean." Luke 5:12, 13.***

## MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

*Those who suffered from leprosy while Christ walked on earth found healing and love at His hands. But many sufferers since then have not known such compassion. The Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite colonies in Paraguay are happy to work with the American Leprosy Missions, Inc., to bring medical care "in the name of Christ" to the victims of this disease in Paraguay.*

ORIE O. MILLER, *Executive Secretary-Treasurer*

## MENNONITE BOARD OF MISSIONS AND CHARITIES

*One of the most successful and most appreciated projects of the American Mennonite Mission in India has been the Shantipur Leprosy Home. Many of their patients find healing for their souls in the full acceptance of Christ as their personal Savior. The Mennonite Church in America is glad to have an effective part in this humane and spiritual ministry.*

J. D. GRABER, *Secretary*

## BOARD OF MISSIONS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH

*New life is opening to sufferers from Hansen's Disease in many places. Reports of their progress make us aware not only of the conquest of their disease but also of the new life that is theirs in Christ Jesus. Similar echoes come from the long established work at Champa, India, and from the school children at Cachipay where the work is much newer. The General Conference Mennonite Church is grateful for the privilege of working with American Leprosy Missions, Inc. in these areas of suffering and need.*

JOHN THIESSEN,  
*Executive Secretary*

## CONGO INLAND MISSION

*Because of the help of American Leprosy Missions, Inc., the Congo Inland Mission has been able to bring relief to more sufferers from this disease than ever before in its history at the Kamayala Leprosy Colony. With a devoted staff of missionaries, and trained and devoted African nurses, it is not only possible to bring physical relief but also tell the sufferers of the relief of sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

H. A. DRIVER, *Executive Secretary*



## AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS, INC.

FORMERLY AMERICAN MISSION TO LEPERS, INC.

156 Fifth Ave., Suite 1134, New York 10, N. Y.